

Aquaria-clays and architectural models form a modern educational tool for the environmental education, fisheries and aquacultures

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The theoretic knowledge provided to university students on the subjects of applied fisheries and aquaculture can be completed and become more efficient when combined with practical exercises, visits to fish farms, field study of fish pathology and applied methods of treatment and prevention. Since the aquatic environment is inextricably connected to the previously mentioned scientific fields (which form the core of the fishing industry), an overall knowledge is a prerequisite for a correct management of the coastal zone, a place which reflects the strongest impact of human pressure. The often lack in financial funds for education, available resources and materials, as well as the long distance between education centres and practice areas, make it almost impossible to implement the educational support activities. Hence, in order to overcome these obstacles, it is necessary to find alternative methods of practical training. The use of simulation models is proposed as an alternative educational tool. Such models can be **architectural models** which depict land fish farms (types of aquaculture farms, facilities, etc.) and **aquaria-clays** of different sizes which can be used for the depiction of different ecosystems. The materials used for the constructions can be either natural (sand, stones, corals, sponges, shells) or artificial (plaster, gauze, cork, wooden items, and polymeric materials). Painting can be effected by using acrylic paints, primers and varnishes. Clay models can also depict organisms in different development stages with emphasis on anatomic characteristics as well as healthy and pathological states encountered in fisheries and aquaculture products. The construction and usage of such models form a new approach in both the theoretical and practical education. It is a relatively cheap solution which highly meets the teaching needs for the environmental education as well as for fisheries and aquacultures. Another fruitful proposal is the involvement of students for the construction of the architectural models within the frame of their graduation thesis. The students will better understand the theoretical knowledge given to them while they will be able to express their ideas on a certain matter, to develop trial methods, to improve an experimental idea and, finally, to develop a strategic thought in problems solving.